

## JOINT INVENTORS

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Richard Zimmermann

## APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT

# **S P E C I F I C A T I O N**

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### TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Be it known that we, Martin A. Kenner, a citizen of the United States, residing at 420 E. 130<sup>th</sup> Street, Burnsville, 55337, in the County of Dakota and State of Minnesota; Brian Westover, a citizen of the United States, residing at 6274 Ben More Drive, Fridley, 55432, in the County of Anoka and State of Minnesota and Peter M. Eisenberg, a citizen of the United States, residing at 4521 Washburn Avenue South, Minneapolis, 55410, in the County of Hennepin and State of Minnesota have invented a new and useful **DISPLAY OF SOFTWARE NOTES ACCESSED BY CONTENT RECIPIENT FROM CONTENT PROVIDER SITE** , of which the following is a specification.

DISPLAY OF SOFTWARE NOTES ACCESSED BY  
CONTENT RECIPIENT FROM CONTENT PROVIDER SITE

Technical Field of the Invention

5 The present invention relates to an arrangement which allows software notes posted at a content provider site to be accessed by a content recipient.

Background of the Invention

10 Network enabled devices such as computers, televisions, personal digital assistants, telephones, games, etc. are currently used to access information and applications from remote sites over internal and external networks. An example of an external network which offers information and applications is the Internet. Sites that offer such information and applications are typically referred to as content providers, and the users of network enabled devices that permit the remote access of the information and applications are typically referred to as content recipients.

20 The applications offered by content providers include e-commerce applications which allow content recipients to purchase or sell products and/or services, bidding applications which  
25 allow content recipients to bid on products and/or

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services, reverse bidding applications which allow  
content recipients to accept bids for products  
and/or services, stock trading applications, and the  
like. Information offered by content providers  
include database information, advertisements,  
bulletin board information, and the like.

Information and/or applications are  
usually disseminated to content recipients who  
access content providers in response to specific  
requests for the information and/or applications.  
One of the problems with this approach is that the  
content recipient must often navigate through an  
extensive web page and/or many web pages to focus in  
on the desired information and/or applications.

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In some instances, this problem can be  
avoided by automatically disseminating the  
information and/or applications from the content  
providers to the content recipients. For example, a  
content recipient who wishes to receive notices of  
new product or service offerings may request the  
retailer to automatically send notices of such  
offerings to the content recipient. Thus, the

retailer may send an e-mail, for example, to the content recipient for each new offering.

One problem with this practice is that the identity of the content recipient is known to the content provider. Thus, the content provider can provide the content recipient's identity to other content providers who may then provide the content recipient with communications that the content recipient may not wish to receive.

The present invention overcomes one or more of these or other problems.

#### Summary of the Invention

In one aspect of the present invention, a method is performed at a content recipient and comprises the following: executing first program code at the content recipient so as to receive content from a content provider; and, executing second program code at the content recipient so as to display the content behind a session if the session is active.

In another aspect of the present invention, a computer readable storage medium stores

program code which, when executed by a computing  
device, performs the following functions:  
automatically initiating a request to receive  
content from a content provider; receiving the  
content from the content provider in response to the  
request; and, displaying the content behind a  
session if the session is active.

In yet another aspect of the present  
invention, a method comprises the following:  
executing first program code at a content provider  
so as to post content for access by a content  
recipient; and, executing second program code at  
the content recipient so as to automatically (i)  
access the content provider, (ii) initiate receipt  
by the content recipient of the posted content,  
(iii) receive the posted content, and (iv) display  
the posted content behind a session if the session  
is active.

Brief Description of the Drawing

These and other features and advantages  
will become more apparent from a detailed  
consideration of the invention when taken in  
conjunction with the drawing in which:

Figure 1 illustrates an arrangement which  
provides an exemplary environment for the present  
invention;

Figure 2 illustrates an exemplary web page  
which may be provided by one or more of the content  
providers shown in Figure 1;

Figure 3 illustrates an exemplary note  
delivered to a content recipient containing  
information posted by a content provider who also  
provides the exemplary web page shown in Figure 2;

Figure 4 is a flow diagram of program code  
that may be executed by the content recipients of  
Figure 1;

Figure 5 is a representation of a screen  
display showing a notifier according to an  
embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 6 is a representation of a screen  
display showing newly posted content burning through

an active session so as to be displayed to a content recipient;

Figure 7 is a flow diagram of program code that may be executed by the content providers of Figure 1; and,

Figures 8-11 show various methods that may be implemented in accordance with the present invention.

#### Detailed Description

An arrangement 10 which supports the present invention is illustrated in Figure 1. The arrangement 10 includes content providers 12A, 12B, 12C, . . . , 12n and content recipients 14A, 14B, 14C, . . . , 14n interconnected by a network 16 such as the Internet. Each of the content providers 12A, 12B, 12C, . . . , 12n may be one or more servers operated by a web site provider, an Internet service provider, a search engine provider, etc. As such, the content providers 12A, 12B, 12C, . . . , 12n offer content that may be transmitted to the content recipients 14A, 14B, 14C, . . . , 14n over the network 16. Each of the content recipients 14A,

14B, 14C, . . . , 14n may be one or more network enabled devices operated by a user such as a consumer, a business, an educational or governmental institution, a web site, etc.

5 In accordance with the present invention,  
one or more of the content providers 12A, 12B, 12C,  
10 . . . , 12n may carry web pages such as a web page 20 shown in Figure 2. The web page 20 is meant to be exemplary only and may have any other format as desired. The web page 20 as shown in Figure 2 has a plurality of elements such as a note 22, which may be a Software Post-it Note® provided by 3M, an advertising banner 24, a graphic 26, and text 28.  
15 The web page 20 may be provided by the content provider who posts the web page 20, or the web page 20 may be provided by third parties who may or may not pay the content provider to offer the web page 20. Alternatively, third parties may or may not pay the content provider to simply add material to the  
20 content provider's own web page. As is known, re-direct URLs may be embedded in the advertising banner 24, the graphic 26, and/or the text 28 in order to re-direct the content recipient to other



web pages posted by the content provider who posts the web page 20 or to the web pages of other content providers.

5 An example of the note 22 is shown in more detail in Figure 3. The note 22 includes a title bar 40 which may carry a general title such as "Note" or a more specific title indicative of the product, service, and/or information offered by the note 22. A pull down menu icon 42 may also be present in the title bar 40 and, when clicked on, offers the content recipient with a choice of options such as alarm set, alarm reset, alarm unset, minimize/maximize, move to attachment container (memo board), move to trash, send note to another content recipient, and various note properties such as font, picture, color, etc. The note 22 also includes a display area 44 in which a graphic 46, text 48, and/or other material may be provided.

15 As illustrated in Figure 3, the text 48 includes a URL 50. The URL 50 is preferably, but not necessarily, a live URL. The text 48 in the example of Figure 3 offers tickets to a game to the content recipient. Assuming that the URL 50 is a

live URL, the content recipient need only click on  
the URL 50 to initiate a function such as a purchase  
of a ticket. Clicking on the URL 50 may be  
arranged, for example, to direct the content  
recipient to the web site of a third party in order  
to purchase the tickets. Alternatively, clicking on  
the URL 50 may be arranged to return the content  
recipient to the content provider posting the web  
page 20 in order to permit the content recipient to  
purchase the tickets. As a further alternative,  
clicking on the URL 50 may be arranged to initiate  
the automatic purchase of the tickets, using  
previously provided payment and mailing  
instructions, from either the content provider  
providing the note 22, or from another web site  
coupled with the URL 50, or otherwise.

As suggested above, the note 22 may have  
other designs. For example, the note 22 need not  
include the URL 50 as an element thereof. Instead,  
the note 22 when received by the content recipient  
through a connection already established by the  
content recipient may instead include a box or other  
area which may be clicked on in order to begin the

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ticket purchase. This box or other area may contain  
a link to other web pages of the content provider or  
to a web page of a third party content provider so  
as to appropriately process the ticket purchase. As  
a further alternative, the link to the other web  
pages of the content provider or to the web page of  
the third party content provider may be provided as  
an option in the pull down menu accessed through the  
pull down menu icon 42.

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The note 22 may be automatically accessed  
by a content recipient in accordance with the flow  
chart shown in Figure 4. This flow chart represents  
a program 60 that is executed by the content  
recipient's network enabled device. The program 60  
may be downloaded over the network 16 from a content  
provider to the content recipient whenever the  
content recipient accesses the content provider's  
web site and appropriately expresses a desire to  
automatically receive future offerings from the  
content provider. Moreover, the program 60 may be  
arranged to universally provide the same functions  
with respect to other content providers. Instead of  
downloading the program 60 over the network 16 from

5 a content provider to the content recipient, the  
program 60 may be supplied to the content recipient  
on a disc or other memory device permitting the  
content recipient to load the program 60 into the  
content recipient's web enabled device.

10 Execution of the program 60 may be  
automatically initiated, for example, each time that  
the content recipient starts the content recipient's  
network enabled device or accesses the network 16  
through the content recipient's network enabled  
device. Accordingly, each time that the program 60  
is started, a block 62 of the program 60 identifies  
and interrogates the content provider associated  
with the program 60 and from whom the content  
15 recipient wishes to download new information,  
product offerings, service offerings, or other  
content. The block 62 may be arranged to target a  
single identified content provider or may be  
arranged to cycle through more than one identified  
20 content provider. For example, the identity of such  
content provider or content providers may be  
manually supplied to the program 60 by the content  
recipient at any time during the content recipient's

5 use of the program 60. Alternatively, the identity  
of a specific content provider may be associated  
with that instance of the program 60 which is  
downloaded from that content provider by the content  
recipient. As a further alternative, the content  
recipient may have entered several content providers  
which the block 62 presents to the content recipient  
on a suitable display and requests the content  
recipient to select one of the listed content  
10 providers during each pass through the program 60.

The block 62, in any case, may be arranged  
to formulate and transmit a message to a content  
provider requesting any new content, which may be in  
the form of one or more notes such as the note 22,  
15 that have been posted on the content provider's web  
page 20 since the last interrogation.

The program 60 at a block 64 then  
determines whether the content recipient has  
received an indication from the interrogated content  
20 provider that the interrogated content provider has  
newly posted content that may be of interest to the  
content recipient. Such newly posted content may be  
in the form of one or more instances of the note 22

which have been newly posted by the content  
provider. If the content recipient has received an  
indication from the interrogated content provider  
that the interrogated content provider has no newly  
posted content that may be of interest to the  
content recipient, or if the content recipient  
receives no response within a predetermined time  
period, the program 60 at a block 66 displays a  
message asking the content recipient whether the  
content recipient wishes to cancel the current  
interrogation. If the content recipient wishes to  
cancel the current interrogation, the program 60  
ends. On the other hand, if the content recipient  
does not wish to cancel the current interrogation,  
program flow returns to the block 62 where either  
the same content provider or a different content  
provider is interrogated.

If the content recipient has received an  
indication from the interrogated content provider  
that the interrogated content provider does have  
newly posted content that may be of interest to the  
content recipient as determined at the block 64, a  
block 68 determines whether the content recipient's

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network enabled device has the software necessary to display the content. For example, where the content is in the form of one or more instances of the note 22, the block 68 determines whether the content recipient's network enabled device has the software necessary to display the notes. This note displaying software is currently available from 3M. If the content recipient's network enabled device does not have the software necessary to display the content, a block 70 requests the download of the content display software either from the content provider being interrogated or from another content provider and installs the downloaded content display software when received.

15                   When the content display software is installed at the block 70, or if the block 68 determines that the network enabled device of the content recipient already has the content display software, the program 60 at a block 72 requests  
20                   download of the newly posted content of interest. The program 60 at a block 74 determines whether the newly posted content of interest has been received. If the block 74 determines that the newly posted

content of interest has not been received within a predetermined amount of time, a block 76 causes the display of a message notifying the content recipient of the failure to receive the newly posted content of interest and program flow then returns to the block 66.

On the other hand, if the block 74 determines that the newly posted content has been received, a block 78 provides a notifier to the content recipient that the newly posted content of interest has been received. This notifier may take several different forms. For example, the notifier may be the content itself which is immediately displayed to the content recipient as the top active layer of any applications that the content recipient has running on the content recipient's network enabled device. Alternatively, the notifier may be a window or an icon or other symbol which is displayed in a tool bar, a title bar, inside a window frame, or at any other suitable location, as an indication to the content recipient that newly posted content has been received. In this latter case, the content may be received and stored in



temporary memory and may be displayed upon suitable  
activation of the notifier at a block 80. For  
example, the content provider may click on the  
notifier in order to display the content.

5 An exemplary notifier 82 of this  
alternative type is shown in Figure 5 and is made to  
appear on a screen display such as a screen display  
84 shown in Figure 6, where the notifier 82 appears  
over a desktop. Although not shown in Figure 6, if  
10 the notifier 82 is displayed as a window or icon at  
a predetermined location on the display, and if one  
or more windows are layered over this predetermined  
location, the notifier 82 is automatically displayed  
as a top most layer so that it is visible to the  
15 content recipient even though another application  
currently has the focus (i.e., is active).

As shown in Figures 5 and 6, the notifier  
82 has two portions. A first portion 82<sub>a</sub> is a  
symbol generally representing a pad of notes such as  
20 the note 22 shown in Figure 3. A second portion 82<sub>b</sub>  
is a symbol generally representing a personal  
computer displaying a note square. The first and/or  
second portion 82<sub>a</sub> and/or 82<sub>b</sub> may be made to flash in

order to indicate that a note has been received and  
has not been opened by the content recipient. Also,  
the first and/or second portion 82<sub>a</sub> and/or 82<sub>b</sub> may  
have other locations such as in the system tray, in  
the system tool bar, in the application bar, etc.

When the content recipient activates the  
notifier 82 at the block 80, a block 88 of the  
program 60 determines whether there is an active  
session being performed by the content recipient.  
An active session, for example, may be an  
application which has the focus of the content  
recipient. If there is an active session as  
determined at the block 88, and if the active  
session is displayed in an area of the screen  
display to be occupied by the content when the  
content is made to appear upon activation of the  
notifier 82, the program 60 at a block 90 uses the  
content display software discussed above in order to  
burn the content through the active session being  
displayed.

Thus, as shown in Figure 6, when the  
notifier 82 is activated, the note 22 is made to  
appear in a predetermined portion of the screen

display 84 which happens to be partially occupied by  
a window 92. Accordingly, the window 92 is burned  
so that a border 94 is provided around the note 22.  
The border 94 allows whatever is in a layer below  
the window 92 to be seen through the border 94 around  
the note 22. Thus, the note 22 burns through the  
window 92 to expose a portion of the layer below the  
window 92.

In Figure 6, the only layer below the  
window 92 is a desktop. Therefore, a portion of the  
desktop may be seen through the border 94. However,  
if a second window is layered below the window 92, a  
portion of this second layer, instead of a portion  
of the desktop, would then be exposed through the  
border 94. Alternatively, the note 22 may be  
arranged to burn through all layers between it and  
the desktop.

If there is no active session as  
determined by the block 80, or after a burn through  
is provided by the block 90, a block 98 causes the  
newly posted content of interest to be displayed  
within the burn through on the display of the  
content recipient's network enabled device. Thus,

as shown in Figure 6, the note 22 is displayed  
within the burn through portion of the window 92.  
Thereafter, a block 100 determines whether an  
attachment location is identified such as by the  
content recipient. If an attachment location is  
identified, the received content is attached to the  
identified location at a block 102.

The attachment location may be identified  
by clicking a cursor over a location to which the  
received content is to be attached. Alternatively,  
the attachment location can be a predetermined  
location within a window that is open and is active  
at the time that the received content is made to  
appear on the screen display. As a further  
alternative, when the received content first appears  
on the display screen of the content recipient's  
network enabled device, the received content may be  
un-attached. However, when the received content is  
dragged and dropped at a new location, it  
automatically attaches to the window or desktop  
under the cursor at the time of dropping. As a  
still further alternative, by clicking a first time  
on the received content and a second time at a

desired location, the received content can be attached to the desired location as indicated by the cursor at the time of the second click.

Attachment may have one or more of the following attributes: the received content is made to appear whenever the location to which it is attached is made to appear or is visible; the received content is made to disappear whenever the location to which it is attached is made to disappear or is not visible; the received content is made to move whenever the location to which it is attached is moved, such as by scrolling or otherwise; the received content is automatically de-attached from a first location and re-attached to a second location whenever the received content is dragged from the first location and dropped at the second location; and/or the received document can be de-attached from one area of a display, such as a first window, and can be re-attached to a second area of the display, such as a second window. Attachment may have different attributes as well so that the attributes listed above are meant to be exemplary only.

The attachment location can be a calender,  
an address book, a window, a document, a desktop,  
etc.

5 If an attachment location is not  
identified as determined at the block 100 or after  
the received content is attached at the block 102,  
program flow returns to the block 66.

10 Figure 7 is a flow diagram of program code  
that may be executed by the content providers of  
Figure 1 in order to provide posted content of  
interest to the content recipient. This flow  
diagram represents a program 110 that is executed by  
a corresponding server of a content provider. When  
the program 110 is running, a block 112 of the  
15 program 110 receives a new content request from a  
content recipient. As discussed above, this new  
content may be in the form of notes such as the note  
22. The new content request contains a unique  
identification of the content recipient's network  
20 enabled device. This identification need not, and  
preferably does not, identify the content recipient.  
Thus, the identification is only sufficient to  
determine which content, if any, has been previously

supplied by the content provider to the requesting content recipient.

5 A block 114 determines whether the identification received at the block 112 was contained in a previous request. If not, a block 116 selects all currently posted content as the content to be sent to the content recipient, and a block 118 sends the selected content to the content recipient.

10 If the block 114 determines that the identification received at the block 112 was contained in a previous request, a block 120 determines whether any new content has been posted on the content provider's server since the previous request of the requesting content recipient. If  
15 not, a block 122 selects a null message indicating that there is no new content. The block 118 sends this message to the content recipient's network enabled device, which may display this message to  
20 the content recipient as desired.

If the block 120 determines that new content has been posted on the content provider's server since the previous request of the content

recipient, a block 124 notifies the content  
recipient's network enabled device that there is new  
content. If a block 126 determines that a delivery  
request has been received from that the content  
recipient's network enabled device in response to  
the notification sent by the block 124, a block 128  
selects only the content that has been posted since  
the content recipient's last request, and the block  
118 sends the content selected at the block 128. On  
the other hand, if the block 126 determines that a  
delivery request has not been received from that the  
content recipient's network enabled device, the  
block 122 selects the null message described above,  
and the block 118 sends this null message to the  
content recipient's network enabled device.

A delivery request might not be received  
from the content recipient's network enabled device  
if, for example, there has been a network failure.  
A delivery request might also not be received from  
the content recipient's network enabled device if  
there has been as machine shut down. For example,  
because many of the operations performed by content  
recipient's network enabled device in executing the



program 60 are background tasks, the content  
recipient might be unaware that a note is being sent  
to the content recipient's network enabled device  
and may inadvertently shutdown the device during  
process of receiving a note. Alternatively, the  
content recipient might shutdown while receiving a  
note because of time constraints. In these  
circumstances, the null message sent to the content  
recipient indicates that the process had not  
finished.

After the content selected at the block  
116 has been sent at the block 118, or after the  
null message selected at the block 122 has been sent  
at the block 118, or after the content selected at  
the block 128 has been sent at the block 118, the  
program 110 waits for the next request.

These or similar features of the present  
invention can be used in a number of different  
business models. For example, as shown in Figure 8,  
the note 22 may be newly posted by a content  
provider 130 acting as a first party. A content  
recipient 132 performs an activity related to the  
note, such as accessing or acquiring the note

through use of the program 60, where the content  
recipient 132 is a second party. The content  
provider 130 provides payment to a payee 134 based  
upon the activity performed by the content recipient  
132. In an example of this model, the payee 134 may  
have provided something of value to the content  
provider 130 that the content provider 130 is  
offering on its web site, and the content provider  
130 has agreed to pay a fee to the payee 134. The  
fee may be a flat fee, or the fee may be paid each  
time that the content recipient 132 accesses that  
content, makes a purchase, or otherwise provides  
something of value in return for the content, or the  
like.

As shown in Figure 9, the note 22 may be  
newly posted by a content provider 136 acting as a  
first party. A content recipient 138 performs an  
activity related to the note, such as acquiring the  
note through use of the program 60, where the  
content recipient 138 is a second party. Payment  
for the activity is provided to the content provider  
136 by a payer 140. In an example of this model,  
the content provider 136 may be a surrogate host for

content provided by the payer 140, and the payer 140  
pays a fee to the content recipient 136 for this  
service. The fee may be a flat fee, or the fee may  
be paid each time that the content recipient 102  
accesses the content, makes a purchase, or otherwise  
provides something of value in return for the  
content, or the like.

As shown in Figure 10, the note 22 may be  
newly posted by a content provider 142 acting as a  
first party. A content recipient 144 performs an  
activity related to the note, such as acquiring the  
note through use of the program 60, where the  
content recipient 144 is a second party. The  
content posted by the content provider 142 is  
supplied to the content provider 142 by a content  
supplier 146. Payment is made by the content  
supplier 146 to a payee 148. In an example of this  
model, the payee 148 may be a creditor or a  
financial backer of the content provider 142 or a  
facilitator of the overall process, and the content  
supplier 146 may be providing payment because the  
content posted by the content provider 142  
advertises products and/or services of the content

supplier 146. As another example of this model, the  
payee 148 may have provided some portion of the  
content supplied to the content provider 142 by the  
content supplier 146 and the content supplier 146  
provides a fee to the payee 146 for that portion.

Indeed, other fees may be exchanged  
between the various parties. For example, the  
content supplier 146 may also provide a fee to the  
content provider 142 for hosting the content  
supplied by the content supplier 146. Any of these  
fees may be any combination of the following: a  
flat fee; a fee that is paid each time that the  
content recipient 102 accesses the content; a fee  
that is paid each time that the content recipient  
102 makes a purchase; a fee that is paid each time  
that the content recipient 102 otherwise provides  
something of value in return for the content; etc.

As shown in Figure 11, the note 22 may be  
newly posted by a content provider 150 acting as a  
first party. A content recipient 152 performs an  
activity related to the note, such as acquiring the  
note through use of the program 60, where the  
content recipient 152 is a second party. The

content posted by the content provider 150 is  
supplied to the content provider 150 by a content  
supplier 154. Payment is made by the content  
provider 150 to a payee 156. In an example of this  
model, the payee 156 may be a creditor or a  
financial backer of the content supplier 154 or a  
facilitator of the overall process, and the content  
provider 150 has agreed to pay a fee to the payee  
156. The fee may be a flat fee or may be paid each  
time that the content recipient 152 accesses that  
content, makes a purchase or otherwise provides  
something of value in return based upon that  
content, or the like. As in the case of Figure 10,  
other fees could also be paid in the business model  
of Figure 11.

Other revenue options are also possible.  
For example, payment may be based upon the number of  
subscribers (content recipients) who request the  
automatic dissemination of notes from a content  
provider as described above in connection with  
Figures 1-7. As another example, payment may be  
required for the download of the program 60 to the  
content recipient's network enabled device. As

still another example, payment may be required from the subscriber (content recipient) for the automatic dissemination of notes as described above in connection with Figures 1-7.

5 Accordingly, the present invention enables a content recipient to receive content in the form of the note 22 or otherwise without the need for the content recipient to provide his or her identity to the content provider. In this way, the privacy of the content recipient is assured and the content provider cannot disclose the content recipient's identity to others such as other content providers. 10 If the content recipient no longer wishes to receive notes, the content recipient need only deactivate the program 60. 15

Certain modifications of the present invention have been discussed above. Other modifications will occur to those practicing in the art of the present invention. For example, the note 20 22 is shown above in connection with the ordering of ticket. However, the note 22 may be provided in connection with any other types of activities such as accessing or acquiring the note 22, making

5 purchases of products and/or services, performing  
banking transactions, making bids, making reverse  
bids, performing searches, requesting or providing  
information, performing stock or other financial  
related transactions, downloading software,  
accessing media of various types, performing plural  
interactions through the same note 22, redeeming a  
coupon, printing a coupon, etc.

10 Moreover, as described above, newly posted  
content in the form of the note 22 is displayed on a  
content recipient's network enabled device within a  
burn through of the active session 88.

15 Alternatively, instead of burning the note 22  
through the active session 88, the note 22 may  
simply be displayed as a top layer having the focus.  
As a further alternative, the note 22 may be  
displayed as a top layer automatically upon receipt  
of the content or dependent upon the subject matter  
of the note 22 or upon an identity of the content  
20 provider or upon a user action.

Also, as described above, newly posted  
content in the form of the note 22 is burned through  
the active session 88 if the notifier is suitably

5 activated at the block 80. Alternatively, newly  
posted content in the form of the note 22 may burn  
through the active session 88 automatically upon  
receipt of the content without the activation of the  
notifier. As a further alternative, newly posted  
content in the form of the note 22 may automatically  
burn through the active session 88 dependent upon  
the subject matter of the note or upon an identity  
of the content provider.

10 Furthermore, payment may be made based  
upon the following activities: placing an order,  
making a purchase, performing a banking transaction,  
making a bid, making a reverse bid, performing a  
search, requesting or providing information,  
15 performing a stock related transaction, downloading  
software, accessing media, etc. Payment may be also  
based upon a level (such as amount) of the relevant  
activity, upon receipt of the note by the content  
recipient, upon any type of interaction with the  
20 note by the content recipient such as clicking on  
the note by the content recipient, and/or upon any  
other interest in the note as expressed by the  
content recipient. Also, payment may be based upon



combinations of the above activities. Additionally,  
if a content provider posts a plurality of notes,  
payment may be made based upon each posted note.

In addition, the notifier as described  
above is a visual notifier. However, the notifier  
may be an audible notifier instead of a visual  
notifier.

Moreover, as described above, the web page  
20 is shown in Figure 2 as containing the note 22.  
However, instead of, or in addition to, the note 22,  
the web page 20 can be arranged to contain a button  
or icon or other area offering a subscription to the  
information contained in the note 22. If the  
content recipient viewing the web page 20 elects to  
become a subscriber such as by activating the button  
or icon or other area or otherwise, the note 22 will  
be supplied to the content recipient such as in  
accordance with Figures 4 and 7.

Accordingly, the description of the  
present invention is to be construed as illustrative  
only and is for the purpose of teaching those  
skilled in the art the best mode of carrying out the  
invention. The details may be varied substantially

Attorney Docket  
56099-USA-1A

without departing from the spirit of the invention,  
and the exclusive use of all modifications which are  
within the scope of the appended claims is reserved.